

Analysis of Important Challenges and Opportunities for the CBC Identified at the October 2, 2014 Workshop

(October 24, 2014)

Background

Participants at the October 2 workshop were asked to identify the most important challenges and opportunities for implementing the 2013 Council resolution on alignment and the new draft mission statements that were developed at the same meeting. An ad hoc team consisting of Kamyar Guivetchi, Bruce Gwynne, Denny Grossman, Don Yasuda and Mike Chapel was then asked to assess the challenges and opportunities by determining how each fit into the following three categories: 1) Recent work by the Council has addressed the matter; 2) Current work is underway to address the topic; or 3) The challenge or opportunity is not being addressed. The team was also asked to draft some recommendations for the important challenges and opportunities that have not been addressed to date. Below are the results of this work.

Important Challenges and Opportunities

The following are the most important challenges and opportunities that were identified by the workshop participants:

Challenges

1. To restore and maintain momentum:
 - There is a need for consistent participation and leadership from the heads of member agencies
 - The direction of Council needs to be clear
2. Available funds and staff resources are limiting the work that supports the Council
3. The unaligned programs, policies, plans, and projects among member agencies are a challenge for consistent and effective conservation of natural resources.
4. It remains difficult to consistently engage local and regional interests in work of the CBC.
5. The CBC has been challenged to complete and especially sustain products (such as CERES, NRPI, and the Wetlands Inventory)

Opportunities

1. There are many emerging opportunities for aligning agency work
2. There are emerging opportunities for improving state and federal agency support for the CBC
3. There are emerging opportunities for agencies to work together in ways that are more effective and efficient.
4. There are emerging opportunities to arrange for new sources of funding and assistance for the Council.
5. There is value in continuing the networking among agency heads.

Analysis

The ad hoc team concluded that the important challenges and opportunities should be categorized this way:

Challenge/Opportunity	Recent CBC Work has Addressed	Current CBC Work is Addressing	More Work is Needed
There are many emerging opportunities for aligning agency work	<i>The recent CBC resolution on aligning agency conservation was drafted to help the Council identify and assist with emerging opportunities for aligning work by members of the CBC. The Council is now working to implement the resolution.</i>		
There is a need for consistent participation and leadership from the heads of agencies.		<i>The Executive Committee has been working for several months to strengthen the leadership and participation by agency leaders. The attendance at the October 16 Executive Committee and the October 29 Council meeting is expected to demonstrate a significant improvement in the participation by agency leaders. The proposed partnership with the Strategic Growth Council will also improve involvement by the heads of agencies.</i>	
The direction of Council needs to be clear.		<i>The 2013 resolution establishes a clear program for improving the alignment of member agency work. At the October 29 Council meeting, the members will be asked to adopt a new mission statement and join another resolution with the Strategic Growth Council. Both of these actions will add clarity to the future direction by the CBC.</i>	
The unaligned programs, policies, plans, and projects among member agencies are a challenge for consistent and effective conservation of natural resources.		<i>The 2013 Council resolution was adopted to address this challenge. The Council is overseeing the implementation of the resolution which is already leading to better alignment of some agency work.</i>	

Challenge/Opportunity	Recent CBC Work has Addressed	Current CBC Work is Addressing	More Work is Needed
There are emerging opportunities for agencies to work together in ways that are more effective and efficient.		<i>The 2013 Council resolution was drafted to address this opportunity. Further advancement is expected when the CBC forms a new partnership with the Strategic Growth Council.</i>	
There is value in continuing the networking among agency heads.		<i>The Executive Committee agrees with this observation and has directed staff to include field trips, meals, and other opportunities into future Council meetings.</i>	
Available funds and staff resources are limiting the work that supports the Council			<i>This is regarded as the biggest challenge for the continuing success of the Biodiversity Council. The dues paid by Council members have not changed since the Council was formed in 1991. In addition, the original signatory agencies all provided dedicated staff and resources to support the Council's work. Today, staff resources are limited to a handful of volunteers and three paid part-time staff. To address this matter, the Council may wish to consider some or all of the following: 1) Insure that all member agencies pay their dues 2) Increasing the member's dues 3) Asking members to assign dedicated staff 4) Considering partnerships with NGO's others to increase staff capacity and resources</i>
There are emerging opportunities to arrange for new sources of funding and assistance for the Council.			<i>As discussed in the previous topic, this is an emerging opportunity that should be addressed soon. The Executive Committee may wish to ask the Interagency Alignment Team to form a work group to draft some recommendations for considering new partnerships for the Council.</i>

Challenge/Opportunity	Recent CBC Work has Addressed	Current CBC Work is Addressing	More Work is Needed
<p>It remains difficult to consistently engage local and regional interests in the work of the CBC.</p>			<p><i>This is probably a function of the lack of local and regional institutions that we called for in the 1991 MOU. With the exception of a couple of local councils of government (SANDAG and AMBAG) there has never been strong participation by local and regional interests in the CBC. The Executive Committee may wish to consider whether they want to change that relationship. The new pilot projects for the IRP Initiative may provide an opportunity to secure greater involvement by local and regional institutions in the pilot project areas. State Conservancies on the Council might also play a role in building stronger relations with local and regional institutions.</i></p>
<p>The CBC has been challenged to complete and sustain products (such as CERES, NRPI, and the Wetlands Inventory)</p>			<p><i>This challenge is directly related to the trends in leadership/participation by agency leaders and the capacity of staff and resources that have been addressed above. If the Council is successful with improving agency participation and contributions, it should also be successful with completing the projects and products it begins.</i></p>